

sole/flathead sole/"other flatfish" fishery category by vessels using trawl gear in the BSAI.

All other closures remain in full force and effect.

#### Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 675.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: May 29, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

*Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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#### 50 CFR Part 675

[Docket No. 960129019-6019-01; I.D. 052996B]

#### Groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands Area; Sharpchin/Northern Rockfish Species Category in the Aleutian Islands Subarea

**AGENCY:** National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Closure.

**SUMMARY:** NMFS is closing the directed fishery for the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category in the Aleutian Islands subarea (AI) of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands management area (BSAI). This action is necessary to prevent exceeding the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category total allowable catch (TAC) in the AI.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 12 noon, Alaska local time (A.l.t.), May 30, 1996, until 12 midnight, A.l.t., December 31, 1996.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mary Furuness, 907-586-7228.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The groundfish fishery in the BSAI exclusive economic zone is managed by NMFS according to the Fishery Management Plan for the Groundfish Fishery of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (FMP) prepared by the North Pacific Fishery Management Council under authority of the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act. Fishing by U.S. vessels is governed by regulations implementing the FMP at 50 CFR parts 620 and 675.

In accordance with § 675.20(a)(7)(ii), the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category initial TAC for the AI was established by the Final 1996 Harvest Specifications of Groundfish (61 FR 4311, February 5, 1996) as 4,445 metric tons (mt).

The Director, Alaska Region, NMFS (Regional Director), has determined, in accordance with § 675.20(a)(8), that the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category initial TAC in the AI soon will be reached. Therefore, the Regional Director has established a directed fishing allowance of 4,145 mt, with consideration that 300 mt will be taken as incidental catch in directed fishing for other species in the AI. The Regional Director has determined that the directed fishing allowance has been reached. Consequently, NMFS is prohibiting directed fishing for the sharpchin/northern rockfish species category in the AI.

Maximum retainable bycatch amounts for applicable gear types may be found in the regulations at § 675.20(h).

#### Classification

This action is taken under 50 CFR 675.20 and is exempt from review under E.O. 12866.

Authority: 16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*

Dated: May 30, 1996.

Richard W. Surdi,

*Acting Director, Office of Fisheries Conservation and Management, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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